

The Need for Incorporating Life Skills into the Curriculum

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Abstract

To make one's life joyful and meaningful, certain skills are inevitable and undeniable whether they are learnt at educational institutes, at home or somewhere. Fundamentally, life is a management and every one is a manager, hence one requires certain skills to manage life i.e., one's mind, energies, emotions, desires and the surroundings. The quality of one's life depends on how well one manages one self. Most pitifully, the graduates from the world reputed business schools are also miserable failures in managing themselves, though they fancy that they are managing big companies. What juxtaposition? One who can't manage oneself is managing a big company! A big state! This is the reason why all sorts of struggles.

The very purpose of life is to be happy and the very aim of education is 'enlightenment'. But most unfortunately, both are not happening for a person even after spending considerable number of years in schools and colleges. Most people who are on the top of the ladder of social success, wealth, name and fame are leading disastrous lives. Why? Only due to lack of Life skills, which are completely out of the college campuses and they are not 'recognized' by 'Universities' and the bodies of 'Higher Education'. Indeed, these skills need not be learnt as they are gifted by nature and they are inborn, but most unfortunately, they are snubbed at the budding stage by one's own loving parents, beloved teachers, caring govt. and near and dear. Hence, the special need to learn these skills which will, in fact become stronger with the animals and birds in course of their growth. As it is said that everyone is born intelligent but education has made them stupid, we now, need to seriously think of a life centered education. It's high time that the Govt., Academicians and Parents realized the significance of incorporating an effective programme in training the students in Life Skills.

Then, what are these Lifeskills? I am going to discuss in this paper about those Life skills that make one's life successful and splendid in the true sense.

If we want to live happily, both externally and internally, it depends on how well we manage ourselves and our surroundings. The quality of life depends on how well we organise ourselves. "Generally, we are applying management to economic situations only, but not life as a whole." says, Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudeva, who is invited to deliver his messages at some of the world's most prominent leadership forums. He further says, "One who doesn't know how to manage one's mind, energies, emotions and interiority, he is managing outside things. That means he is performing tasks very accidentally, and when one does big things accidentally, he is a potential calamity."

Whether one manages a simple kitchen or a large industry, s/he is a manager in her or his own capacity and requires certain life skills which are not being developed through decades of academic learning in the schools and colleges. For, in academic institutions, in the name of competition, the students are taught all those techniques which can make their life most unpleasant and miserable. Education must be able to instill in the children those traits that help them lead their lives in joy and satisfaction. But what is happening is, a person who is successful in his career also is not experiencing happiness and is not able to lead a life of satisfaction and at the same time one who is a worst failure in his career also is in the same miserable condition. You can understand the depressed condition of a person who is unsuccessful in life, but what about the wretched condition of an accomplished person who is always down in the dumps? Success doesn't come easy. In spite of success in career, one is a failure in life. "Strangely, people are suffering their success also." says Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudeva.

The modern education is not teaching the skills of managing the human resources in terms of – one's emotions. In the name of so called managing men and women, the human beings are subjected to emotional breakdown and eventually, the very existence of man is at great risk. There is no inspiring environment. The duty of a manager is to create an inspiring environment in which the capabilities and the potentialities of the human beings flourish. In a span of 20 years, a most successful manager in the business becomes a failure in his personal life losing his health, peace of mind and friends. He creates in the family a sort of tension and undesirable atmosphere in the name of results and achievements. The end result is – Heart attack, hypertension and diabetes. Even in big B' schools, the art of handling the human emotions is not taught. Hence there is a dire need to introduce in the education, the most important Life Skills.

Both the parents and the teachers are training the children in the 'skill' of 'beating' all his 'friends' in the ladder of life and sit on the 'top' and naturally, everyone cannot be on the top of the pile; hence struggle for all. Neither the teachers nor the parents are able to create in them a thirst for knowledge irrespective of whether they can make money or not. If we are successful in kindling the fire of learning in them, then nobody can stop them from acquiring knowledge. Then the 'growth' of a child would be completely different since it is natural. But what is happening is- parents have become obsessed with and fervent about the 'First' ranks only, but not of 'the education' of their children. The idea of the parents about education is – earning, social status and all other related things. Hence, both the teachers and parents are creating meaningless competition and putting pressure on the children. Comparison is competition. Most unfortunately, two unique beings are compared. The parents and the teachers are not at all bothered about the happiness and the wellbeing of the child. The blissful life of the children is broken and nipped in the bud and made miserable.

Every individual is potentially different from others, and no two individuals can be compared with each other. But in the field of education, forgetting this basic fact, an unequal and unfair comparison is taking place continuously. Education has become mere competition and comparison only. Hence pressure is built up for no reason at all. This can be called nothing but suppressive and imposed education. This is, undoubtedly a great

sin. The intelligence of the child is being spoiled since the parents want them to be intelligent in their own way but not in the way of the child. That is the problem. Parents don't allow the genius of their children flourish in its own way. For the main motive of the parents is that their children should amass money at the cost of anything in the world. True human genius will not flourish in this kind of sick academic background. Human genius cannot find its fullest expression in competition but only in an absolute relaxation-relaxation of body and mind. One's mind and body will realize their ultimate potentialities when one is peaceful and joyful with oneself. When you think of competition, you just want to be a step ahead of others; that's all. This kind of attitude will not allow you to realize your fullest potentialities. If a child is absolutely open, without any prejudices, then the genius in the child flourishes in a natural way.

The whole idea of education is broadening the horizon of a child, keeping their intelligence intact. In the present education, is it happening? The more one is educated, the more he is becoming selfish, close minded, greedy and possessive of all material things (by becoming a 'consumer'). The modern education is not making man 'inclusive', but it is making him 'intolerable'- to the extent of not accepting his own parents as 'family'. Now, to a man with the University education, family means, his wife and one child and in many cases, only individuals. Even a wife and husband living together has become a problematic thing due to their attitudes which have been shaped by the education since this intolerance is mainly with the 'well educated persons' who are becoming highly exclusive. The student is entering into a great field of competition instead of entering into humanity. Hence he is becoming self conditioned which will not allow him to accept anybody.

"Educationally, spiritually and culturally, we are left as orphans." says, Master E.K. who trained thousands of young men and women in Life Skills by imparting them true education. He feels, "We are *leaving away* life instead of *living a life*". When there are only commercial relations in the society at all levels, then there will be only commercial kind of education.

There is a wide gap between the elders and the youngsters. Many old people are being left uncared and are living in isolation, awaiting their death. This is a modern phenomenon, being nurtured by the educated elite. Our education is incapable of making a person realise the basic human qualities, leave aside the special skills. The precious link between the old generation and the younger one is miserably missing. It is a dangerous trend in the present society.

People are successful in life not because they have degrees, but because they have capabilities. The present education is all about adding extra alphabets (in the words of Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudeva) to one's names in the name of degrees, which in turn, turn him arrogant and discourteous towards one's own people. But real education is to make a person, oblivion of one's individuality, and enable him mingle with the society only to serve it to the best of his ability. Indeed, Life Skills are required to do the best to the society but not to grab from the society. Since someone is educated in a top institute of technology or in a prestigious business school, he cannot demand the govt. to provide

him with a top job, but he should be able to create opportunities or employment to others. Such skills of creativity are seriously missing in our modern education. Producing brains is important but not producing literates. Education should stimulate one's intellect but not dull them, which is a great disservice to the humanity. Education must be capability oriented but not degree oriented. This is possible through 'practical education' but not highly 'theoretical' education.

Whether one is able to create a disastrous weapon, or a life saving drug, it all depends on how well one is coordinated with oneself- with one's emotions, one's desires and one's energies. If one is skillful in managing oneself, he will be very successful in discharging his duties as a responsible, disciplined and creative human being. This skill has to be consciously imparted by the academic institutions. This can be done through spiritual education. Spiritual training is nothing but enabling a person to crystallise and direct one's energies and emotions in a proper direction. It is not at all a religious training. Through religious training, one becomes narrow minded, by being confined to certain dogmas. Spirituality is for breaking the barriers of all limitations of body and mind and realizing the potentialities of oneself.

Indeed, the massive disaster on the globe always has happened due to the so called 'intelligent' persons who are miserable failures in coordinating their emotions and energies. But for the highly educated and intelligent persons, there would not have been large scale destruction on the globe that has happened so far. Because the best brains in the world came together to cooperate with one another for the creation of destruction on the globe. Stupid and ignorant fellows are incapable of causing such large scale of violence. Human intelligence is a greatest blessing to the mankind but it has become a curse in disguise. Education has a major role in these disastrous activities.

Children are nearer to life when compared to elders who have gone far away from life. Those who are driven away by their emotions wish to train the children. This is one major problem in the field of education. They just suppress the bubbling life of the children in the name of their own imaginary discipline and misleading education. It is like teaching how to perform an operation, without possessing any fundamental knowledge of medical science. There is absolutely no inspiration from the teacher, just some sort of information which can be gained from any of the different sources. A teacher is one who can inspire and rest of the things are automatically accomplished. A teacher is disorienting the children. If there is no inspiration, no human being will be able to rise beyond certain level. Today education is totally bereft of that inspiration. The teacher is not the best instrument for transmission of information, if only he is meant for transferring the information. Creating inspiration is all that a teacher needs to do. Inspiring the children must be a continuous process. It should be like nurturing a plant with love and care. Inspirational education should take place in the academic institutes. If we are not inspired, we tend to be confined.

There is absolutely no training to the students in regard to health, which is an attitude, a great life skill. The most important aspect of life is being neglected and ignored. The positive attitude of a person helps him being healthy and energetic. Negative attitude in

life makes one mentally diseased and it reflects on the physical body in different ways. The student has to be trained in these dimensions of health. Thought forms 'channels of energy'. Positive thoughts direct a person's energies in a constructive way and make him healthy. The thought currents will be changed in a positive direction. In the name of consciousness of health, many people become conscious of their illhealth due to negative thinking. In fact, medicine can work only 20 percent whereas positive power of thought is 80 percent.

Modern education is teaching the students to think of themselves only, use everything available on the planet. The whole process of science is – how to use everything for your comfort? Now the situation has come to such a ripe situation as to 'how to use man' for his comfort, as that of an instrument. This trend or attitude is highly dangerous and is creeping into the majority of the population. People in India were inspired as a population only before Independence. Never has it happened. There should be a constant inspiration, coming from the parents at home, teachers in the school and from the leaders in the govt. and public life. Then the youth, the life line of a nation can rise beyond the limitations.

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